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DIE SOV 2-76

AMERICAN EMBA:  
29 MAR 1976  
NAIROBI, Kenya



# DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

PREPARED BY  
DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
DIRECTORATE FOR ESTIMATES

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## MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE OF SOVIET DEVELOPED FACILITIES IN SOMALIA (U)

20 FEBRUARY 1976

### WARNING NOTICE

Sensitive Intelligence Sources and Methods Involved

Classified by DIA-DE  
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ESTIMATIVE TERMS AND DEGREES OF PROBABILITY

In this estimate, we have expressed major estimative judgments in numeric form (e.g., chances out of ten or percentages), in order to convey to the reader their degree of probability more precisely than is possible in the traditional verbal form. Our confidence in the supporting evidence is taken into account in making these quantifications (see comments on completeness and reliability of evidence at the end of the estimate). All efforts at quantifying estimative judgments are highly subjective, however, and should be treated with reserve.

Readers are requested to provide the DIA Directorate for Estimates their views on the utility of this procedure together with any suggestions for its improvement or refinement.

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DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE OF SOVIET  
DEVELOPED FACILITIES IN SOMALIA (U)

This estimate has been coordinated with the Intelligence Chiefs of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps. All concur in the estimate as written.

APPROVED BY:

*Robert J. Bower*  
ROBERT J. BOWER  
Acting Deputy Director  
for Estimates

DIE SOV 2-76

20 February 1976

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MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE OF SOVIET  
DEVELOPED FACILITIES IN SOMALIA (U)

This estimate assesses trends in the establishment of Soviet-developed facilities in Somalia, their future expansion and significance in terms of general Soviet interests in the area, and the probable impact they will have on the Soviet military presence in the area.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

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REA

A. (S) A July 1974 Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation and other agreements concluded at that time apparently have formed the basis for the expansion of Soviet activities in Somalia. The Soviets have acquired special access rights to Somali facilities, including the strategically located port of Berbera.

B. (S) Despite countervailing external pressures on Somali President Siad, the Soviet presence will almost certainly continue (90 percent chance). We expect construction in Somalia for Soviet Navy use to be concentrated at Berbera, where anticipated expansion may include secure and exclusive military berthing and repair facilities for Soviet naval units separate from the commercial port.

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C. (S) We believe the missile support facility under construction at Berbera is intended to store, maintain, service, and assemble missiles with conventional warheads in support of Soviet ships and submarines (90 percent chance), and aircraft (70 percent chance).

D. (S) A new Berbera airfield will almost certainly (95 percent chance) become the primary support facility outside the USSR for a variety of Soviet air missions in the Indian Ocean area,<sup>1/</sup> and will add important dimensions to Soviet military capabilities there. Soviet aircraft operating from Berbera will be able to conduct extensive open-ocean reconnaissance; provide target data relay, ASW, SIGINT collection and logistic support services; support Soviet space-related activities; and rapidly augment anti-shiping capabilities in the Indian Ocean.

E. (S) Facilities expansion, in itself, does not presage a greatly expanded Soviet Indian Ocean military presence in the near future. We believe these improvements are intended to support the requirements of a small but gradually increasing presence, as well as what the Soviets

<sup>1/</sup> In this estimate, the term "Indian Ocean area" is used to refer to the Indian Ocean, contiguous waters (e.g., the Red Sea, Persian Gulf, Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea), and territories in or on the littoral of these waters.

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probably consider essential requirements for surge deployment (85 percent chance). Present and anticipated Soviet facilities in Berbera will provide the means, however, for enhancing the capabilities and the credibility of Soviet ships, submarines, and aircraft operating in the Indian Ocean area.

Note: Comments and/or questions concerning this estimate should be referred to LCDR Colin Moran, Soviet/East European Division, Directorate for Estimates, DIA, OX-4-8105.

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[Omitted here is the detailed discussion section.]

Future Prospects

28. (S) The present and anticipated future Soviet facilities in Berbera will provide the means for enhancing the capabilities and credibility of Soviet ships, submarines, and aircraft operating in the Indian Ocean area. We believe, however, that the facilities expansion activity does not presage a greatly expanded, continuous Soviet Indian Ocean military presence in the near future. While some Soviet warships, submarines, and aircraft may spend time at Berbera, we do not expect to see major Soviet units stationed there permanently or in large numbers. Soviet ships generally anchor near Socotra Island in the mouth of the Gulf of Aden, and we expect this practice to continue. Aircraft deployments from the USSR will probably be short term as the need arises, particularly for exercises or during crises. We believe the improvements at Berbera are intended to support the

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requirements of a small but gradually increasing presence, as well as what the Soviets probably consider essential requirements to support surge deployments during crises (85 percent).

29. (S) President Siad's continued rule and reliance on the Soviets to perpetuate his position of power and social revolution are considerations that will probably affect the future Soviet presence. Despite the pressure of public exposure of Siad's collaboration with the Soviets, the quiet but obvious disapproval voiced by other Arab and African leaders, and the Somalis' repeated denials of the existence of Soviet facilities in Somalia, the Soviet presence there will almost certainly continue, at least through Siad's presidency (90 percent). Siad remains heavily committed to close relations with the USSR and is in firm control of the government.

30. (S) While we estimate that in the near term Siad will remain in power, there is a possibility that an eventual successor government might sharply reduce the level of Somali dependency on the USSR and curtail Soviet access to military facilities there. There are, however, no identifiable Somali leaders of national stature who appear committed to reversing the trend of close Soviet-Somali relations. Moreover, Somalia is preoccupied with strengthening its armed

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forces and depends on Soviet assistance. We conclude therefore, that the chances are better than even that any successor government would continue to rely on Soviet support and continue to permit a substantial Soviet military presence there.

#### COMPLETENESS AND RELIABILITY OF EVIDENCE

(S/NOFORN/WNINTEL) The evidence concerning Soviet construction in Somalia is considered generally complete and reliable for the purpose of identifying external physical features and dimensions of facilities and equipment. This evidence is overwhelmingly photographic. It is supplemented in some important details by a first-hand report of a US official who visited most of the Berbera facilities. There is no direct evidence, other than actual Soviet political, economic, and military deployments and other activities, of the USSR's plans or intentions for its future posture in Somalia. While we do not consider the latter body of evidence to be complete, we do consider it to be sufficiently reliable to support the judgments in the estimate.

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